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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/827,477	04/19/2004	David L. Sicley	15538	3290
6123	7590	07/10/2006	EXAMINER	
JAMES EARL LOWE, JR. 15417 W NATIONAL AVE # 300 NEW BERLIN, WI 53151			HUG, ERIC J	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1731	
DATE MAILED: 07/10/2006				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 4, and 5 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's admission of prior art in view of Luthi (US 3,837,499).

A cylindrical rotating thickening device having an axial core, a shell, a means for supporting the shell around the axial core, and a perforated deck surrounding and supported on the shell, are known in the prior art as disclosed by Applicant. A deck including a plurality of closely adjacent deck segments extending around the shell in the circumferential direction is also known in the art, as disclosed by Luthi. Such a deck provides for easy replacement of individual segments rather than replacement of the entire deck if damaged. The segmented deck also allows for expansion under operating conditions. See column 6, lines 42-58. The deck segments have a leading edge and a trailing edge, with one edge of a deck segment held against the shell by the next adjacent edge of a following deck segment. See the figures.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 2, 3, 6, and 7 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 8-10 are allowed.

The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

The claims are allowable for further providing the shell with longitudinally spaced apart grooves and bars attached to a leading edge of the deck segments that are received by the grooves.

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Watson (US 3,175,691) discloses detachable drainage sectors.

Bailleau (US 3,429,256) discloses a sleeve of perforated plate elements.

Luthi (US 3,794,178) discloses laterally adjacent drainage sectors.

Sun (4,561,156) discloses detachably mounted shell segments.

Kastingschafer et al (US 5,253,816) discloses a roller shell composed of segments.

Bielagus (US 5,385,309) discloses a roll surface composed of removable segments.

Iannucci (US 5,690,300) discloses a core shaft composed of interlocking segments.

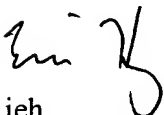
Fukui et al (US 6,792,859) discloses a rotating drum composed of interlocking segments.

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Eric Hug whose telephone number is 571 272-1192.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Steven Griffin can be reached on 571 272-1189. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


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